



Tracing of the impact of being queer and question on their sexual identity in Indian stories.

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Abstract

The present paper deals with the queerness or queer sexuality of India. It basically presents how queerness arises in Indian literature from ancient and modern texts India being diverse in its culture, languages and ethics as well. Sexual identities are directly linked to their tradition, colonization, which is often a conflicted part. The present discusses how it breaks stereotypical notion for sexual identity. The main argument in this paper is to trace the queerness in India by analyzing Lihaaf by Ismat Chughtai and Housewife by Rabindranath Tagore.

KEYWORDS- Queer, LGBT, Hindu mythology, Purana's, Judith Butler, Tagore, Chughtai-

INTRODUCTION

Queerness or queer sexuality in India has always been favorite topic of debate and discussions whether a number of laws have been passed on this by government. But, on this topic, in India their identity will always questionable. It goes through several dilemmas and suffering from "To be or not to be" like Hamlet- India being diverse in culture and its ethics as well Indian sexual identities are directly linked to their tradition, colonization, which is often a conflicted part. Queerness is common in western culture, for western people it's normal to have relation with same sex but in India it is matter of conflict or controversy.

The term "Queer theory" came from Teresa de laureates' 1991 work in the feminist culture studies journal differences titled 'Queer theory' Lesbian and Gay sexualities'. It is the fourth wave of feminism, which is not common at all till today. According to this theory, every person can choose their sexuality according to them. It is not inborn, i.e., we can't determine the sex of a person after their birth. In our masculine society, sexes are determined by birth and according to their works, dress sense. According to this theory, a person is free to choose the same sex partner. Although, it is very strange and not common for our society. But what can we do? In our society where we live, we don't have even right to choose partner of opposite sex, although it is familiar now but in ancient time or even today at many places, a person who choose their partner it is said that they broke the family tradition and culture because these are compared with caste and gender.

Queer theory was first used by "Thomas Babington Macaulay in India in section 377 to the Indian penal code which Still looms large over country. In Sep 2018 Supreme Court of India passed a law "under section 377 which results in discrimination and is violative of constitutional principles". According to this LGBTQ community or gay and lesbian have given right to choose the partner by the law.

The concept of 'new women' was laid foundation from Kama sutra. This concept brought the identity of lesbian or gay who is sexually open and derives pleasure from the women or men of same sex. This was considered to be

unethical and illogical and was against moral code of their behavior. In Kama sutra there is description of sexual activity between same sex which arises queerness and depicts that it was present in our ancient times. This concept of new women we saw in works of writers like Ismat Chughtai, Kamala Das or Rabindranath Tagore. They brought the identity of lesbian, gay or third gender in their literary works.

Literature Review

There is not much presence of queer on Indian Stage until Mahesh Dattani's play 'Bravely fought the queen' in 1991 except Vijay Tendulkar's play 'Mitra' in 1982, which was regarded as first Indian play with a lesbian protagonist. During 1970s when feminism started to question on gender and sex then theorist Simone de Beauvoir gave definition i.e.

•one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.' (Beauvoir, 2010, p.267)

In 1990 Judith Butler was the first gender theorist who distinguished the link between gender, sex and sexuality and formulated the concept of Gender Performativity. According to the thesis 'Gender Performative Theory' by Judith Butler she argues about socially constructed notion for gender where she says that gender identity is not fixed. It's built on pile of social and cultural experiences and on their performances. She draws much from Foucault's idea but with focus on gender. She argues in her book 'Gender Trouble' that gender like sexuality is not an essential truth obtained from one's body but something which is portrayed from reality. Butler makes it clear that performativity is not the same as performances. Butler's work brings to light the creation of gender contesting the rigidity of hierarchical binaries that exist and is what makes her work invaluable in queer theory.

Data Collection

Collection of data is an essential part of research work. Data is of two types i.e., Primary source and secondary source. A research paper can be based on any of the sources. In primary usually we collect data from surveys, interviews, and observation. For this research work, the primary is a film and most of the collections are based on secondary sources i.e., Books, pdf, journals, articles.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Basically, research methodology is used to identify, select, process and analyze information about a topic. In a research paper, this section allows a reader to critically evaluate and answers two questions: how data is collected or generated and analyzed. In this research work, critical appraisal is done on the available literature topic. This exploratory research is conducted by analyzing the mythological text and short stories with the objective to prove that queer is not new in our country, it is somehow present in our culture and traditions.

Queerness in the mythology or Puran's.

As every religious text has separate story of origin of life on earth whether it is bible, Quran or Hindu or Greek ancient texts. Similarly, these all have somehow shown the existence of homosexuality in a few passages of their text. LGBTQ community always faced discrimination. In a few Hindu law books same-gender sexuality is described as producing a state of impurity, but it can be expunged by a ritual bath.

In Greek mythology there is a myth Of Tiresias who has changed his gender from male to female and nymph who was hermaphrodite transformed from a woman into an intersex being. In Tamil literature there is a Story of Somvat and Sumedhas. There were two boys who were not getting married because they didn't have cow, so they went to queen for cow, but she refused, because she gives cow to couples. Therefore, they both planned that they would alternately play the role of wife and will appear before queen twice to get cow. But their trick was not liked by the god, so he converted Somvat into Somvati. In this story, if we see it from contemporary point of view, we can derive queer interpretation i.e., two boys want to get married, and God fulfill their wish. Here we saw that two same sex person got married. Even in Yog Vashista, there is a story of chandala. She was yogini but her husband doesn't accept that she is spiritually evolved. He says that a woman can't have knowledge, so he went to forest in search of

guru where he found a man who was his wife. She came there ,in the face of man. She used to transform her look at night and said that God had doomed me, so I get transformed into a lady at night. They got attracted to each other and have sex. It is a tantric Story in which Chandala takes various forms —male &female and king knowingly has sexual relation with a person whose gender is indeterminate.

In this ancient Story, Chandala is having relation with a man or can say it is a story of third gender which is strange. All these stories deal with gender, homosexuality, transgender. There is another world beyond the binary world of the man and woman.

In Hindu mythology Mahabharata, there is Story of Shikhandi. In that story there was a king who brings up his daughter as a son. Her physical body is that of a girl, but society sees her as a boy. She got married. On the wedding night bride discovers that bridegroom is also a girl which creates problem for his father. So, Shikhandi acquires male genital with the help of yaksha. On the ninth day of war between Pandavas and Kauravas there was no result. Thus, Krishna planned the politics of gender and brings Shikhandi whose transgender status is strategically used in war to kill Kauravas. Here, Bhishma asks about Shikhandi that she is women, but Krishna justifies this that now she is a male, but Bhishma wants to recognize his male Status i.e., her female to male Status.

In this Hindu mythology what we acknowledge? His physical body, his psychological or his expressed body? How does this Story find its way into Mahabharata? Because they have seen or experienced third gender.

There are many other short stories and plot in which the character is male by day and female at night. Queer subjects are well covered in the Mahabharata or Tulsidas Ramayana. There is a famous line in Tulsidas Ramayana.

"Any man, any transgender, any woman, any living being as long as they give up deceit and come to me with love for all they are

Dearest to me."

In Ramayana there is description of third gender when Ram was going to jungle, he asked to go back to home with all man and woman, but he has not said anything about third gender, so they wait till Ram came back from jungle. After analyzing the Hindu mythological texts, one can identify the changing pattern of social boundaries. The erotic text of ancient India, the Kama sutra gives the transgender and the homosexual's marital rights. It accepts the existence of the lesbian. The queerness in mythology needs to be viewed from political and religious angles because it somehow reflects social reality.

The boundaries we create from our thoughts and imagination don't exist in nature. One can say when lord Ram had not distinguished between man, woman or transgender then Why human has thought of hatred for them. Our Shastras show many kinds of families or social group but not necessarily that of male or female, it can be of same sex or transgender.

Queerness in Indian stories

Being gay or lesbian is considered as a disease in our society, but it is not true. It is considered a disease because it's unique. When two same sex persons come in a relation, they hide it from their parents because they know that they will not understand them due to society. Generally, male and female is considered as a couple but when two same sex persons are a couple then face humiliation and question on their identity. Although, we know generally that opposite attracts each Other just as North and South Pole. Scientifically, two same poles never get attracted to each other, i.e., North Pole can't get attracted to North Pole then how two same sex persons get attracted, although they can neither reproduce nor can adopt child then how queerness arises. Why it arises? Is it because of some hormones or because they don't trust the opposite gender? Is it because of the rise in domestic violence or is it a way to control populations? It may be because of one of the reasons. Queerness which is a debatable topic whether it is in India or abroad. One may think that the concept of queerness arises from western culture to India because people are following western culture blindly so it may develop the thought that it is taken from there, but is it so?

If we analyze the Indian text or Indian literature 'Quilt' by Ismat Chughtai which was very controversial work because she a lesbian relationship. This gave her a chance to express herself. It is derived from Chughtai's own childhood

incidence. 'Quilt or Lihaaf' showed an erotic relationship between Begum and Rabbo. It brings out the homoerotic actions because she was neglected by her husband.

In Quilt queen was attracted towards a girl. Why? Because of her husband who didn't give her time and sexual pleasure which she wanted. So, in a way we can say, it arises because of dissatisfaction from partner or can say what is available at that time to get satisfied with need, it arises gradually. In the Story, Chughtai didn't show direct relation of begum and Rabbo. She showed it in indirect way with quilt which gave sign of sexual act between them. With the help of quilt, she gave rise to queerness in the story and presented how they forget about society norms because need is more important than societal norms.

The queer identity is also strongly highlighted in Tagore's work. He criticized the role of male and female which is constructed in 19th or 20th century. In the short story 'Housewife' by Rabindranath Tagore he presented the gender role and attitude towards sexual behavior. In this Story there was a boy Ashu who was playing with his sister. His only fault was to play with his sister house-house which was caught by his teacher Shibanath Who was very arrogant and androgynous. This turns Ashu to be 'Ginni' i.e., female head of household and the taunt of 'Ginni' made him feel to be queer. Ashu Who may be in guilt of not being masculine because Of his teacher.

Through this story Tagore presented the duty of gender and their role in public or private spaces. He tries to that how a work plays an important role in their identity of being masculine or feminine. With the Story, Tagore tries to break the stereotype of identity and presented that a human should not be judged of their respective work because roles are not divided between male and female. Here, With the character of Ashu, Tagore presented that a character's choice is important not their gender. In other words, we can say Queerness not only arises of being gay, lesbian or transgender but also arises when a male plays the role of woman in household work. If female is doing works of male, then there is no question arises, but it only arises on male because our society has defined the work for male and female and because of patriarchal thinking.

CONCLUSION:

Queerness is now a common term in India and queer literature is growing across the country with authors and filmmakers. It suffers a lot, despite having such a significant presence in the inner and outer world i.e., its presence is also marked in ancient mythology and in 21st century. The writers and filmmakers of India tried to be subaltern voice behind their identity through their work but faced a lot of controversy. Movies like Subh mangal Jada savdhaan or Fire or Laxmi where gay, lesbian or transgender relation are shown. Through literature and film, they tried to break the stereotypical notion of society, but it does not get accomplished completely. Literature or short stories from mythological text can't find solution completely of their identities but can be a way to find their identity. With mythological text, a person can develop their presence among us and can change their thought on their identity and can also treat them as same a normal human.

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